



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

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Laurel Man Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison for Soliciting Murder of His Wife

A Laurel man who pleaded guilty, last fall, to offering \$15,000 to an undercover police detective to murder the man's wife was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Aafaq Manejwala, 37, of the 8700 block of Polished Pebble Way, was sentenced in Howard County Circuit Court on Monday.

At last November's plea hearing, prosecutors stated that a woman that Manejwala met as a result of a Craigslist ad for sexual services tipped off police. Manejwala solicited the woman to commit the murder but she, instead, went to the Laurel Police Department which subsequently contacted Howard County Police.

A police detective, posing as the woman's cousin from North Carolina, was introduced to Manejwala as a hit man who could kill Manejwala's wife as she slept, and make the crime look like a home invasion robbery or burglary. The two men had a series of planning meetings that took place in High Ridge Park in Laurel last March. At their final meeting, held at 6 a.m. on March 29, Manejwala handed the detective five, \$20 bills as a deposit and set a target date of May 5, 2016. After his arrest, police seized financial records which showed him heavily in debt. Police also found a \$1 million life insurance policy on his wife.

At Monday's hearing Assistant State's Attorney Doug Nelsen stated that the act of soliciting the murder of "your child's mother is vicious and heinous." He said that Manejwala was unhappy in his marriage, that he had relationships with other women and "didn't believe in divorce."

Manejwala's defense attorney produced a forensic psychiatrist who detailed Manejwala's history of depression, anxiety, and an unhappy marriage that "impacted his thinking and behavioral controls." Manejwala's father and twin brother spoke on his behalf, along with his wife. She told the judge that the events of the past year were "painful and not easy to understand" but that her husband was a "kind, caring, loving person." Manejwala apologized to his wife and family and stated that he was "forever remorseful." Referring to his young son he stated, "The most important thing that a father can do for his child is to love his mother, and I love her in epic proportions."

Howard County Circuit Court Judge Timothy J. McCrone took particular note of her willingness to forgive her husband but chastised Manejwala for the "cold and calculating manner in which (he) planned to kill his wife. He sentenced Manejwala to 50 years in prison, suspending all but 20 years and ordered him to serve five years on probation upon his release.

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